

## **MAIL MANAGEMENT BULLETIN**

**FY 2013**

**April 13 – May 13**

1315 East West Highway (SSMC3/Suite 3866)

Silver Spring, MD 20910

Office: (301) 713-2411

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## **USPS NEWS & UPDATES**

### **No Planning, is Planning to Fail**

Only four months into the year we've seen many stories to do with white powder threats, as well mail bombs are still a real threat. Four have been reported this year thus far. Stay vigilant, if it does happen it could mean the loss of limb and or life. Your alertness and ability to prevent a catastrophe from occurring is invaluable.

Mail threats are on the rise. Mail security training and awareness planning should to be put in place. Awareness can create alertness and contribute to safety and security.

Do you have a mail safety plan? How often do you review it? If a mail threat were to occur how will you respond? If you receive a suspicious package what should you do? How do you identify a suspicious package?

Your safety plan should be reviewed every quarter (3) Three months. Due to the increase in threats and the heightened security level in our country, we should prepare more often.

Attached also you will find the latest USPS Mail Security guide publication. Your mail management team welcomes your questions and is available to assist you. If you, someone on your team, or someone you may know needs mail security training or additional information on mail security please share this publication and call or email your mail management.

## **MAIL MANAGEMENT BULLETIN**

### **FY 2013**

**February 13 – March 13**

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## **USPS NEWS & UPDATES**

### **SAFETY & SECURITY**

### **“That’s Suspicious”**

The Mail Center is a first line of defense for your agency therefore, examining every piece of mail before you do anything with it is mandatory. Below is a standard list of characteristics that will assist you with identifying a suspicious letter.

#### **Characteristics of suspicious packages or letters**

- Excessive postage, no postage, or non-canceled postage.
- No return address or obvious fictitious return address.
- Packages that are unexpected or from someone unfamiliar to you.
- Improper spelling of addressee names, titles, or locations.
- Unexpected envelopes from foreign countries.
- Suspicious or threatening messages written on packages.
- Postmark showing different location than return address.
- Distorted handwriting or cut and paste lettering.
- Unprofessionally wrapped packages or excessive use of tape, strings, etc.
- Packages marked as "Fragile - Handle with Care", "Rush - Do Not Delay", "Personal" or "Confidential".
- Rigid, uneven, irregular, or lopsided packages.
- Packages that are discolored, oily, or have an unusual odor.
- Packages that have any powdery substance on the outside.
- Packages with soft spots, bulges, or excessive weight.
- Protruding wires or aluminum foil.
- Visual distractions.

Mail Center employees should be trained to recognize and report suspicious packages. Characteristics of a suspicious package or letter vary, depending upon the types of mail that your operation routinely processes. What is suspicious in one Mail Center is not necessarily suspicious in another. However, anything from the following list that is unusual, in terms of your normal mail, or multiple items from this list, should draw your attention. If you, or someone within your office, require training, please contact us that we may forward training materials to you.

Copies of a “suspicious mail” poster(s) should be displayed in every Mail Center. Attached are posters from the FBI, and USPS. Make sure your office has the posters visible. Phone numbers of whom to call should be affixed on the poster(s) for easy access during an emergency.

## **MAIL MANAGEMENT BULLETIN FY 2013**

**December 12 – January 13**

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### **USPS NEWS & UPDATES SAFETY & SECURITY**

## **How to Recognize and Handle a Suspicious Package or Envelope**

### Identifying Suspicious Packages and Envelopes

*Some characteristics of suspicious packages and envelopes include the following:*

- **Inappropriate or unusual labeling**
  - Excessive postage
  - Handwritten or poorly typed addresses
  - Misspellings of common words
  - Strange return address or no return address
  - Incorrect titles or title without a name
  - Not addressed to a specific person
  - Marked with restrictions, such as “Personal,” “Confidential,” or “Do not x-ray”
  - Marked with any threatening language
  - Postmarked from a city or state that does not match the return address
- **Appearance**
  - Powdery substance felt through or appearing on the package or envelope
  - Oily stains, discolorations, or odor
  - Lopsided or uneven envelope
  - Excessive packaging material such as masking tape, string, etc
- **Other suspicious signs**
  - Excessive weight
  - Ticking sound
  - Protruding wires or aluminum foil

**If a package or envelope appears suspicious, DO NOT OPEN IT.**

### Handling of Suspicious Packages or Envelopes

- Do not shake or empty the contents of any suspicious package or envelope.
- Do not carry the package or envelope, show it to others or allow others to examine it.
- Put the package or envelope down on a stable surface; do not sniff, touch, taste, or look closely at it or at any contents which may have spilled.
- Alert others in the area about the suspicious package or envelope. Leave the area, close any doors, and take actions to prevent others from entering the area. If possible, shut off the ventilation system.
- WASH hands with soap and water to prevent spreading potentially infectious material to

- face or skin. Seek additional instructions for exposed or potentially exposed persons.
- If at work, notify a supervisor, a security officer, or a law enforcement official. If at home, contact the local law enforcement agency.
  - If possible, create a list of persons who were in the room or area when this suspicious letter or package was recognized and a list of persons who also may have handled this package or letter. Give this list to both the local public health authorities and law enforcement officials.

## **MAIL MANAGEMENT BULLETIN FY 2013**

**October 12 – November 12**

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### **USPS NEWS & UPDATES SAFETY & SECURITY**

#### **9/11 and Anthrax Anniversary**

Last month, Americans commemorated the 11th anniversary of the 9/11 and the anthrax attacks. We looked at both events to see what we could learn and found surprising similarities, and one stark conclusion.

In both 9/11 and the anthrax attacks, a system that we once assumed was familiar and safe was turned against us. With 9/11 it was airplanes -- the 9/11 attacks took advantage of flaws in US counterterrorism procedures, where passengers have been told to obey hijackers and wait for authorities to resolve the situation. The anthrax attacks exploited our trust in opening white envelopes.

Disrupting terrorists is another major departure. In the case of 9/11, the screening response is to closely control those boarding aircraft, and deal with the terrorists before they board. In contrast, the approach to the anthrax attacks is to concentrate on mail detection upon delivery, only after it has entered the mail flow. As a result, both mail facilities and co-located, unrelated, mail can be contaminated, if not fully secured. In Amerithrax, 35 postal facilities and commercial mailrooms were contaminated and the presence of anthrax detected in seven of 26 buildings tested on Capitol Hill. Of the five anthrax-related deaths, two were USPS personnel who worked at the Brentwood mail facility in DC, and at least two others died of anthrax without having received an anthrax-dosed letter.

Perhaps, the most important lesson we can draw from these events is that, while we've made great strides in improving our security, our last, best, line of defense remains our own vigilance. Once they understood that their only hope lay in taking action, the passengers of Flight 93 fought back to deny their hijackers a complete victory. Since then, passengers have successfully defended their lives from the Shoe bomber late 2001 and the Underwear Bomber in 2009.

Three thousand people died teaching us this lesson. There is no better way to honor their memory than to heed it. Your vigilance is directly tied to your survival!